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ABSTRACT

This publication examines reading instruction techniques that can be used by teachers to diagnose and remedy students' weaknesses in reading social studies materials. There are four chapters. Chapter one discusses issues, including trends related to reading in the social studies and problems presented by social studies textbooks. Chapters two and three focus on prereading exercises that can be used to prepare students for social studies materials and active reading behaviors that can make students fuller participants in the educational exchange between text and reader. Methods to assess students (the cloze procedure, informal reading inventories, and teacher observations); techniques for assessing materials; and ways to set the stage for reading (attending to study skills and vocabulary) are examined. Chapter three discusses active reading behaviors. There are observed behaviors that take place during and after the reading of assigned materials and really entail a holistic approach to communication involving listening, speaking, and writing, as well as reading. Chapter four focuses on implementation. Issues discussed here include education of the handicapped, individualized instruction, the reluctant reader, teacher's role, and inservice and professional growth. (Author/RM)

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# reading in the social studies classroom

by
Terry L. Bullock
Karl D. Hesse

Social Studies Consultant:
Carole L. Hahn

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## FOREWORD

Some parts of this book call for social studies teachers to reorient their perceptions of the teaching of reading in the social studies classroom. We believe that social studies teachers can profit from reconsidering the nature of their content area. It is important to acknowledge the changes that social studies curricula have undergone in the past decade and reflect on how these changes can be accommodated by a refined consciousness of reading problems. As the social studies curriculum has expanded and diversified to include everything from economics to psychology, from political science to history, there has been an increased demand for reading instruction appropriate to these various disciplines.

To meet these growing (and increasingly specialized) demands, Chapters 2 and 3 focus on some prereading exercises that can be used to prepare students for social studies materials and some active reading behaviors that can make students fuller participants in the educational exchange between text and reader. While we appreciate the value of these prereading exercises and skills and have tried to illustrate their proper use, we also wish to emphasize the practical utility of reading procedures that approach content reading problems from an active behavioral stance rather than from a skill-application perspective. That is, we think that pretaught skills are not always the most effective way to deal with reading problems; consequently, we also describe a number of active reading behaviors that social studies teachers can encourage in the classroom while students are actually reading.

The courts and our society have brought into focus some issues that relate directly to reading in the content areas. Chapter 4 discusses some of these issues—education of the handicapped, accountability, specialized personnel, inservice training—in a casual, informal way. We hope this will help social studies teachers feel more confident as they face controversies and quandries related to these issues.

We have not attempted to be definitive, largely because the issues in question are still so much in flux. However, we hope that at least in two areas (the constitution of the social studies curriculum and the utility of active reading behaviors in promoting better reading comprehension) we have clarified some of the problems social studies teachers typically face.

We would like to thank our students in secondary reading classes for giving feedback on our ideas; Dotty Wearne, Florence McCulley, Michael Kennedy, and Lois Jones-Feist for their brainstorming in the early stages of this book; Jeannine Ferguson for typing; and Martin Drury and Edith Slinger for their assistance in preparing and writing the final manuscript.

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## PREFACE

This book, by Terry Bullock and Karl Hesse of the University of Oregon, presents a lively, challenging, and somewhat controversial program for the teacher working with reading materials in the social studies classroom.

The authors first discuss how the teaching of reading does not have to detract from the teaching of social studies content, but rather can serve to lead students into content, to enhance and augment content. Bullock and Hesse then identify the problems of teaching within this framework and discuss the assessment of students and of reading materials. In the remainder of the text they present plausible solutions to these identified problems. There are many alternatives; the authors feel that no one way of teaching is acceptable in all situations.

In Chapter 3 the discussion of active reading behaviors is particularly interesting. As defined, these are observed behaviors that take place during and after the reading of assigned materials and really entail a holistic approach to communication involving listening, speaking, and writing—as well as reading.

Chapter 4 focuses on implementation. Issues discussed here include education of the handicapped, individualized instruction, the reluctant reader, teacher's role, and inservice and professional growth.

Bullock and Hesse speak to the concerns of many teachers by providing a variety of specific strategies to help social studies teachers increase student understanding of the curriculum.

*—Alfred J. Ciani*
*Series Editor*

# 1. CONTEXT FOR READING IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

This book will examine a number of reading instruction techniques that can be used by social studies teachers to diagnose and remedy students' weaknesses in reading social studies materials. This book also will discuss student and teacher classroom behaviors. This dual emphasis on reading instruction techniques and on classroom behaviors should help teachers develop a unified strategy for teaching students how to read their social studies texts with fluency and efficiency.

Reading in the social studies is an issue that has been debated not only by social studies teachers, but by other content area teachers as well. The notion that every teacher is a teacher of reading has been bandied about for quite some time, but the real concern seems to be how to stress reading skills without sacrificing social studies content. Teachers must come to realize, however, that content is naturally acquired as a byproduct of improved reading skills. Social studies teachers deal with a variety of reading materials (such as textbooks, newspapers, handouts, and research articles) and the students in their classes have a wide range of abilities; the process of reading can be viewed as a necessary ingredient in the curriculum, a skill that opens the door to higher level thinking.

Teachers need to look at reading not as an isolated skill or an add-on to the curriculum, but rather as a means of enhancing and enriching the social studies curriculum. Reading should not be taught as a series of isolated skills, but rather through content. This approach is similar to the one recommended by the authors of the revised social studies curriculum guidelines described in the April 1979 issue of *Social Education* (35a).

While this book will not continue this debate of whether social studies is in fact different from or part and parcel of the social sciences, it does recognize the great variety of social studies courses in the curriculum. As Ehman, Mehlinger, and Patrick point out: (15)

> In general, when teachers say they "teach" social studies, and students assert they are "taking" social studies, they are referring to structured courses in the curriculum. For all practical purposes, social studies is treated by the school administrations, teachers, parents and students as formal courses, usually one or two semesters in length, in which students learn a body of content suggested by the course label. Thus, one way to examine secondary (elementary) school social studies is to see what courses students are most likely to encounter.

The modern social studies curriculum offers such areas as anthropology, sociology, economics, history, geography, psychology, law, consumer education, and political

science. Curricular pluralism, then, is the reality with which students and teachers of social studies must deal.

It is this plurality that represents the greatest challenge for social studies teachers. They must help students understand the content and methods appropriate to each discipline. There are vast differences among them—the narrative quality of history, the experimentalism of psychology, the quantifications of economics, the theorizations of political science.

Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to make reading an integral part of every content area curriculum. One reason is that print is the most widely used medium of instruction. This is especially true in social studies, where so much of the content is conveyed by written materials: textbooks, original documents (diaries, journals, letters), magazines, and newspapers. In social studies, reading is of paramount importance.

Despite the fact that so much of the social studies curricula is written, students taking these courses have a tremendous range in reading level. For example, students in a ninth-grade civics course will probably range from third grade to college level in reading ability. If these students are to learn the course content, the teacher must know how to adjust materials and lessons to meet the needs of all students. This book helps social studies teachers know what to expect of their students and offers ways for teachers to help students meet these expectations.

## TRENDS RELATED TO READING IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES

During the past decade, the professional literature has evidenced a great deal of interest in reading in the content areas. Most major reading methods textbooks include whole sections or chapters on this topic, and many have even addressed specific content areas. Experts within individual content areas have focused increased attention on reading in relation to their discipline. Social studies is widely discussed and the sections on teaching reading in the social studies tend to be long and detailed.(40) This is a sign that more and more variegated reading techniques are now required to teach social studies.

Reading specialists have seen their field undergo a terrific expansion as reading has differentiated itself into a number of skills and specialities pertinent to different tasks and subject matters. This growing awareness is not limited to reading people. Articles on reading have appeared recently in journals dealing specifically with social studies education. For example, the January 1978 issue of *Social Education* devoted a special section to "Improving Reading in the Social Studies," including articles on vocabulary, comprehension, critical reading, and free reading. Another example is Joseph E. Mahony's 1978 article, "Improving Reading Skills in Social Studies," published by the National Council for the Social Studies (33a).

This heightened awareness of the importance of reading is a positive phenomenon, because it has demonstrated to teachers and others that students have different reading backgrounds and reading needs, and teachers must be able to identify and cope with these in order to help each student become a better individual and citizen.

The social studies curriculum guidelines recently published by NCSS (35a)

look at four interrelated components—knowledge, abilities, valuing, and social participation—through which teachers can work toward the goal of preparing "young people to be humane, rational, participating citizens in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent" (p. 262). Let's examine these components and see how they relate to the active reading behaviors described in Chapter 3.

1. *Knowledge* refers to "the reservoir of data, ideas, concepts, generalizations, and theories which, in combination with thinking, valuing and social participation, can be used by the student to function rationally and humanely" (p. 263).

2. *Abilities* are the means by which objectives are achieved. The abilities that students need are "intellectual, data processing, and human relations competencies" (p. 263).

3. *Valuing* refers to helping students learn about different value systems to prevent an ethnocentric view of the world. Valuing does not mean indoctrination but rather enlightenment.

4. *Social participation* refers to "the application of knowledge, thinking, and commitment in the social arena—at the local, state, national, and international levels. . . . Programs ought to develop young adults who are able to identify and analyze both local and global problems and who are willing to participate actively in developing alternatives and solutions for them" (p. 266).

These four components are all interdependent and form a dynamic relationship in which knowledge is the foundation, abilities are the means by which we obtain and use knowledge, valuing is the way we view the world around us, and social interaction is the way we interact with that world.

Each of these components must be kept in mind as one seeks to improve reading instruction—for instance, by promoting the seven active reading behaviors* discussed in Chapter 3. In actual reading situations where students are expected to ask questions, they are likely to have opportunities to use already acquired knowledge and exercise the more complex cognitive processes such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Then as they seek answers to their own questions they will confront their own value system and the value systems of others.

## READING-RELATED TOPICS

With the surge of research and analysis in the name of reading and social studies, a host of topics are being addressed by those writing about reading in the social studies curriculum. Many of these topics have always been of interest and

* The seven active reading behaviors are: 1) paraphrasing, 2) preparing summaries, 3) making predictions, 4) asking questions, 5) constructing diagrams, 6) identifying unknown words, 7) varying reading rates.

concern to good social studies teachers. The topics include motivation, the nature of social studies materials, and differences between students.

## Motivation

Motivation is certainly one of the major issues in teaching students to read social studies materials. Although the content of these materials is often timely, relevant, and straightforward, social studies materials are often perceived as dull and/or difficult by students. The diversity of disciplines (anthropology, psychology, political science, economics, etc.), and the broad range of skills necessary for mastering them (narration, experiment, theory, calculation, etc.) may be discouraging to many students.

## Nature of Social Studies Materials

Social studies textbooks pose a number of problems for students—not so much in content, but in expression and presentation. The teacher may be poorly trained in reading skills appropriate to the content area or may even lack adequate preparation and background in the content area (or sub-area) itself. These problems must be faced and resolved.

***Readability.*** Social studies textbooks vary widely in readability among different texts and even within a single text. Most social studies textbooks are written by several authors. Despite attempts to edit prose for uniform style and degree of difficulty, readability often varies from one part of a textbook to another. In addition, authorial biases and differences in academic background and philosophical orientation challenge the readers of textbooks (both students and teachers) to evaluate the material critically. Of course, the differences in authors' viewpoints and styles can provide not only variety and interest but also an occasion for students to sharpen critical perception. In short, good teachers can take deficits like a variable level of readability and turn them into benefits by reassessing the goals toward which they are working.

***Conceptual Load.*** Conceptual load is another concern with which social studies teachers must contend. The concerns are several: the number of new concepts introduced in each chapter, the manner in which the concepts are explained to the reader, the interrelatedness of concepts, and the amount of background information the author both assumes and provides the reader.

The issues centering around conceptual load confront the social studies teacher in two different ways: (1) from the standpoint of selecting an appropriate text that presents material in a clear and logical manner, and (2) in actually using the textbook to teach concepts. Chapter 3 shows how conceptual load can be reduced by using "readiness" activities, particularly by preteaching unknown words.

***Illustrations, Charts, Maps, Graphs.*** Social studies materials contain almost every conceivable type of illustration: cartoon, map, chart, graph, diagram, line drawing, and photograph. The social studies teacher must be able to assist the

student in using these visual aids. H. Alan Robinson talks about two ways in which visual aids are presented by authors of social studies textbooks: "direct reference" and "no reference."(40) In other words, visual aids can be discussed and explained in the narrative, or they can be inserted without comment. In the extreme "no reference" case, an important illustration could be missed because the author did not discuss it. Of course, charts, maps, and graphs require more explanation than photographs. The teacher determines whether students can "read" these aids.

Visual aids can help students get a much firmer grasp and a clearer "picture" of the material being presented. One of the best ways to do this is by using a "teach-test" model. This model will be explained in Chapter 3.

***Format.*** Format can add to or detract from the material. In selecting materials and helping students read them, teachers must consider print size, placement of visual aids, paragraph summaries in the margins, headings and subheadings, spacing (two columns or one column, margins), typeface, and texture of paper. Just as readers of novels flip through the pages to see how much dialogue there is in comparison to pure narrative, so students scan their textbooks and are attracted to or repelled by the format. The kinesthetic aspect of books has been greatly underestimated. If a student must wrestle with a book to make it lie flat, that student is that much less likely to read it.

***Portability.*** Portability is another factor that often is overlooked. Many history, geography, and government textbooks are heavy and bulky. This may seem a petty issue, but students are much more likely to carry a book that is lightweight and portable. Similarly, students are less likely to be put off by a softcover book, the kind they pick up themselves in a drugstore, than by the gray, hardcover tomes they are so frequently burdened with in school. As Fader makes clear: "The second advantage of softcover, easily portable texts lies in the invitation to possession and casual reading in their very form."(17) Indeed, where it is feasible, student ownership of books is to be encouraged. This follows the old maxim of Mortimer Adler: "Make a book your own: write in it!" When students own books, they feel freer to enter into written dialogue with the author, between the lines and in the margins.

## Differences Between Students

The background preparation that students bring to the social studies classroom can vary from extensive to nonexistent. In Grades 7 and 8, it is reasonable to expect students to have had at least one course in social studies, history, geography, or civics. This holds for Grades 9 through 12. While all students will generally have had some exposure to social studies content, they are not necessarily adequately prepared, since equal exposure does not signify equal retention. Teachers can, however, make an effort to avoid troublesome reading materials that prove to be difficult and discouraging. In this way more students can be brought to the point from which new learning can begin. Teachers can also try to maximize the interrelatedness of disciplines previously studied and those under current investigation. Transference of knowledge and generalization of skills should be stressed by social studies teachers in order to organize the student's knowledge and take advantage of the student's past learning experiences.

## CONCLUSION

Having looked at the problems presented by social studies texts, we next examine solutions to these problems. We will look at the following topics: (1) informal assessment of students, (2) assessing social studies materials, (3) teaching reading skills in the social studies, and (4) setting up activities for bringing a social studies text within the grasp of students.

# 2. ASSESSMENT AND GETTING READY TO READ

Chapter II is divided into three main sections: (1) assessing students, (2) assessing materials, and (3) setting the stage for reading.

## PART I: ASSESSING STUDENTS

This section will focus mainly on informal assessment techniques, including the cloze procedure, informal reading inventory (IRI), teacher observations, oral reading samples, and student self-ratings. These informal approaches are more useful than are standardized tests. (4)

### Informal Assessment of Students

Time limitations are an important consideration for social studies teachers; therefore, they need quick and easy strategies for matching students with appropriate reading materials and for diagnosing reading problems.

***The Cloze Procedure.*** The cloze procedure is a rough measure for placing students in appropriate reading materials. It provides little, if any, diagnostic information. On the other hand, the cloze test does a respectable job of matching students with materials, and it does point out students who need further diagnostic work and special attention. The cloze test can be used with any type of social studies material—history, geography, civics, or current events. Furthermore, it is extremely easy to construct, administer, and score.

How does the social studies teacher use the cloze? The procedure is very straightforward. To construct a cloze test, select a 250-word passage representative of the social studies material you will be using in your classroom. The passage should be intact; in other words, do not simply stop at 250 words, but go on until a natural pause occurs at the end of a sentence or paragraph. This means that the passage will vary from 250 to 300 words in length. Delete every fifth word according to the Bormuth procedure(7) for a total of fifty blanks. It is generally acceptable practice to leave the first and last sentence intact. This helps the student establish context and sets some logical boundaries around the passage. When typing the test,

all blank spaces should be of equal length, so the length of the blank does not give a clue as to the length of the word. Ask students to fill in each blank with an appropriate word, so that the entire passage makes sense. If students are not sure which word fits a particular blank, they should be encouraged to make a guess. For a short sample of the cloze test, see Appendix, Text Reference I.

The scoring procedure for the cloze is straightforward. A student who fills in between 44 to 57 percent of the blanks with the exact word of the text is at the instructional level. A student below 44 percent is at the frustration level, and one above 57 percent is said to be at the independent level.

A brief explanation of these terms is in order. Instructional level means that with normal classroom instruction (for example, prereading activities, vocabulary instruction), the student can handle the material. Frustration level means that the student is probably unable to handle the material without a great deal of assistance from the teacher or from a tutor. Independent level means that the student can probably handle the material with ease and perhaps more challenging material is in order.

Teachers should take some precautions when dealing with the cloze procedure. First, a large number of deletions for a given passage (especially in geography, history, and biographic materials) could include a number of proper nouns. This would influence the responses from students. Second, the exact replacement technique can seem a bit dogmatic, especially when certain words have a number of legitimate synonyms (for example, *big* for *large*). Third, the "newness" of the material or the lack of background on the part of the student could influence responses. These factors suggest that teachers adopt a common sense approach whenever dealing with assessment techniques. Nevertheless, keep in mind that any change in the scoring system must reflect a change in interpretation of those scores.

If teachers would like to use the cloze test to obtain more informal diagnostic information, they should look beyond the score to the types of responses made. Talk to the student about the choices made. Such observation and discussion gives the teacher insights into the student's vocabulary, experiential background, and analytical style and capacity.

***Informal Reading Inventories.*** A teacher can assess a student's ability to read social studies material by constructing and administering an informal reading test. Choose a short (300 to 500 word) passage from the textbook—a passage that has not yet been assigned—and make a copy for each student to be tested. As the student reads the passage aloud, the teacher will mark (on another copy) all errors that the student makes. These errors include omitted, substituted, or inserted words; no responses; and self-corrected words. Generally, if students read at least 120 words per minute and make no more than six errors, they should be able to handle the textbook content. Students who make seven to twenty errors can handle the material with prereading and vocabulary help from the teacher. Students who make more than twenty errors should not be expected to read the given material and perhaps should be referred for remedial help.

To assess students' comprehension of the passage, construct four or five questions on the material and present these, either orally or in writing. If students can answer at least 79 percent of the questions correctly, the material is probably within their ability level.

Another approach is to ask the student to read the passage silently, then answer the questions. If any students have difficulty with the material, the teacher

might construct a new test using a sample of the same content written at a lower level. Media center personnel can help the teacher locate this material.

The first attempts at administering these informal tests may be more of a learning experience for the teacher; however, the more familiar the teacher becomes with the technique, the more useful the information gathered. Teachers frequently report that using this informal assessment technique with a few students generates a number of common sense ideas on how to accommodate the low-performing students within the total class setting.

***Teacher Observations.*** As teachers learn to observe reading behaviors of their students, they begin to note certain behaviors that may indicate poor reading habits:

1. The student will probably waste time during in-class assignments
2. During class discussion, the student will not show evidence of having learned from the text.
3. The student will avoid, whenever possible, any research, extra reading, or other outside assignments.
4. The student will not do well on tests where questions are taken from the text rather than from class discussions.

These behaviors may cue the teacher to administer some type of informal reading assessment.

## PART II: ASSESSING MATERIALS

There are a number of readability formulas available; however, most determine readability level on the basis of sentence length and unusual or polysyllabic words. We will examine two relatively easy methods. (There are many other readability formulas available; most books that deal with content area reading have sections on readability. The reader is referred to the Selected References at the end of this volume.)

The Fry Readability Estimate (see Appendix, Text Reference II) uses a 100-word sample. Count the number of sentences within that sample to the nearest tenth and then count the number of syllables in the passage. After making a sentence and syllable count, use the Fry Graph to chart the reading level of that passage. There are several points to remember when using this method. First, proper nouns and numbers are not counted. Second, stop at exactly 100 words and determine to the nearest tenth the number of sentences contained in the 100-word selection. Third, take a minimum of three 100-word samples from a text (one passage from the beginning, one from the middle, and one from the end of the text). This assures a representative selection of passages. After selecting three passages and determining the number of sentences and syllables for each passage, compute the average sentence length and syllable count. Apply these figures to the Fry Chart (see Appendix, Text Reference II).

To do a more thorough job of determining readability, expand this procedure. For example, take three representative samples from each section of the text or take three samples each from the beginning, middle, and end of the text.

Another readability formula that is simple to use is the FOG. Designed by Robert Gunning, this formula uses a count of words in each sentence and words that have more than two syllables. Once you have counted the number of words of three or more syllables, enter them in the following formula:

Reading Grade Level = 0.4 (average sentence length + percentage of words of three or more syllables)

It must be remembered that both the FOG and the Fry Readability Formula give only *estimates* of the readability level of a particular book or passage. We strongly recommend that teachers use their own judgment in accepting or rejecting the validity of these findings. Whether or not a student can handle the reading material is also a matter of teacher's judgment. Take into account such factors as a student's past experience, motivation, and interest in the topic.

When assessing reading materials, factors other than readability need to be considered. Many of these factors were discussed in Chapter 1. In addition, Ruth Waugh (51) has reviewed the literature on how to choose a textbook to improve student comprehension. Two ideas in particular should be helpful to the social studies teacher: (1) "Select texts with a short summary presented prior to a more lengthy text passage," and (2) "select texts with question organizers." Waugh points out that the most helpful type of advance organizer is a summary statement or short summary paragraph. The research provides no precise guidelines on how often these advance organizers should occur, but a summary statement for each 800 to 1000 words of text is a good rule of thumb. If a summary is followed by a lengthy passage, the key points are lost and knowledge previously acquired by the reader is not retrieved.

Question organizers can also boost a student's understanding of a text. Questions at the end of a reading passage allow a student to review what has been read and facilitate comprehension. However, if these questions occur too frequently in the text, they interfere with the student's reading of the passage and reduce comprehension.

According to the research Waugh reviewed, below average and average students benefit most from advance organizers and questions in the text. A summary of the key concepts coming up in a passage helps students who have difficulty with reading materials focus their attention. Questions following a passage assist the student in reviewing key concepts.

Of course, there are many reading materials in social studies and other subjects that do not feature these two organizing elements. A teacher can make up this deficit by reviewing the reading assignment with students and determining the key concepts on which students should focus. Advance organizers or summaries can be prepared by the teacher. See Chapter 3 for more information and suggestions.

## PART III: SETTING THE STAGE FOR READING

It is the responsibility of the teacher to set the stage for reading. This can involve (1) a review of study skills, including the Directed Reading and Thinking Activity (DRTA) and Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review (SQ3R)—

structured techniques that help a reader get started; (2) attention to vocabulary; and (3) preparation for active reading.

## Attending to Study Skills

The key thing to remember about any reading comprehension technique is to use it *before* students read an assignment, rather than after. There are five steps in the SQ3R technique, developed by Francis Robinson: (39)

1. *Survey*—Students are generally asked to cover a great deal of reading material in social studies classes. It is helpful if the student first previews each reading assignment to get the general idea of what that assignment covers. The student should be encouraged to take five or ten minutes to become familiar with the main idea(s), headings, subheadings, chapter title, italicized words, boldface print, and introductory materials.
2. *Question*—Most social studies materials are carefully organized, with each part carefully labeled. This step requires that the student turn chapter headings and subheadings into questions. For instance, *The Influence of Drugs on American Culture in the 1960s* would be changed to *What were the influences of drugs on American culture in the 1960s?* This helps the student establish a purpose for reading the assignment.
3. *Read*—This step should follow immediately after completing the previous step. The student should read the material to find answers to the questions raised. In addition, the student should take notes while reading. This can be accomplished in several ways: (1) note cards, (2) notebook, (3) underlining in the text, or (4) marginal notes.
4. *Recite*—The student looks back over the questions posed in Step 2 and answers these questions. A student who is unable to supply an answer should go back and reread those passages that dealt with any questions that were troublesome.
5. *Review*—This final step includes going over the assignment to reexamine questions. The student should determine how much information has been retained and what needs to be reviewed. Short reviews (five or ten minutes) coming every couple of days helps a student more than a single lengthy review coming several weeks after the original study session. The review also gives the student a chance to reread difficult portions of the assignment and reread notes that were taken during Step 3.

In helping students learn to use the SQ3R technique, it is useful to go through these steps several times so students can fully understand the procedure. The goal is to get students to the point where they can use this strategy independently.

The DRTA outlined by Russell Stauffer (46) is similar to the SQ3R model. This procedure involves the following steps:

1. *Set the stage*—The teacher provides background for the assignment. In social studies, this can be done in a number of ways: anecdotal story, personal story, filmstrip, cartoon, movie, slides, magazine, newspaper clippings, and so forth. In this way the teacher can create interest for the assignment and relate past reading materials to the current assignment.
2. *Introduce new words*—The teacher introduces new words and concepts that the student will encounter in the reading.
3. *Students read for a stated purpose*—The teacher sets the purpose for reading the assignment. This can be accomplished by posing questions to the students. As mentioned earlier, this is easily accomplished by turning headings and

subheadings into questions. It is equally important that each student set a purpose for reading the assignment, as this increases student motivation.

4. *Follow-up activities*—This final step includes a review of the purposes for reading the assignment and a chance to apply what has been learned in either a test situation or another type of learning situation.

## Attending to Vocabulary

Each social studies curriculum is built around a set of concepts that the teacher hopes to incorporate into the students' store of information. Each of these concepts can be represented by a word or set of words. One sign of effective reading in social studies is seen in a student's ability to learn unknown words (or unknown meanings for familiar words) encountered in reading assignments. One of the best ways a teacher can set the stage for reading comprehension is by preteaching key vocabulary.

Before making any reading assignment, the social studies teacher should familiarize students with those words that describe the important concepts. Choose the *key words* to be presented. To do this, list the main ideas or concepts that you wish to develop. Each concept can be approached by defining or explaining selected key words. For example: *Concept*: The laws of our country are made by elected officials who serve in two governing bodies, the House of Representatives and the Senate. These bodies must both pass a bill before it becomes law. *Key words*: Congress, legislature, legislative branch, etc.

After choosing a list of key words, there are several things that need to be done to help the student read:

1. The students should learn to recognize the words as *labels*. Help students become familiar with how the words look and they are pronounced. The teacher might write the words on the board, and talk about their pronunciation and spelling (breaking the words into syllables, if necessary). For example: *meridian*—me · rid · i · an. Give students a general idea of a word's meaning. If there are meaning units within the word (prefixes, roots, suffixes), ask the students to find them. For example, *recreation*: *re* = again, *create* = to make new, *tion* = act of. Thus, *recreation* = to make new again. Now when students read, they will not constantly be stopped by words they do not recognize, breaking their train of thought.

2. Next, students should get a general idea of what a word means so they will be able to fit new words into the concept explanations. First, have the students find the words within the context of the assignment. It is helpful for the class to do this together, so students can discuss possible meanings based on how the word is used in the sentence.

3. Finally, since these words were developed from the list of concepts, the teacher can use these words to give students a visual picture of the way the assignment is organized. "Advance organizers" (3, 4, 2) help the student see the way the material is organized and focus attention on major ideas. Research by Weisberg (53) and Hall (21) show that when these advance organizers are *visual*, students' performance is significantly higher than when they are expository (study questions, etc.). Earle (14) and Barron (5) call this method of organization a "structured overview," and they provide some instruction for its construction and use:

   1. Analyze the vocabulary of the learning task and list all words representative of the major concepts that students should understand.

2. Arrange the list of words until you have a diagram that shows the interrelationship among the concepts particular to the learning task.

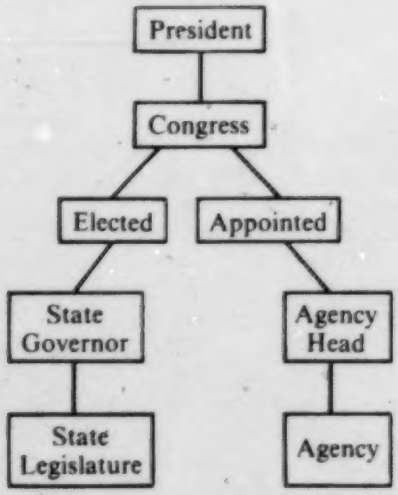
3. Add to the diagram vocabulary concepts that are already understood by the students in order to depict relationships between the learning task and the discipline as a whole.

4. Evaluate the overview. Have you depicted major relationships clearly? Can the overview be simplified and still effectively communicate the relationships that are most important?

5. When you introduce the learning task, display the diagram to the students and explain briefly why you arranged the words as you did. Encourage the students to supply as much information as possible.

6. During the course of the learning task, relate the new information to the structured overview as it seems appropriate.

A structured overview in government might look like this:




As students read the assignment, discuss what they have read, or write reports, the teacher should watch for evidence that they cannot read a word or do not fully understand the concept behind it. The teacher should (1) give immediate feedback, if possible, developing recognition of and understanding of the word, and (2) make a note of words that need further study. These words might be written on a chart or in a space reserved on the blackboard. In this way students are always aware of the words for which they are held accountable, and these words are readily available for reinforcement activities. Having the words "on view" will help students become familiar with them. Encourage students to add new words to the list.

As words are selected for review, there are many reinforcement techniques that can be used. Games, puzzles, and group practice can make the learning more fun.

For example: The game of Bingo can become an excellent vocabulary reinforcer. The students can make the game themselves. Give each student a blank

Bingo card (the squares are drawn, but contain no words). Instruct students to randomly select 24 words from the current vocabulary list and write these words in the squares. The students should then write definitions for the words on small pieces of paper, one definition to a sheet. Collect the definition squares and exchange Bingo cards. The teacher or a student can draw definitions and read them, as students place markers in appropriate squares to match a word on their Bingo card. This set of definitions can be reused until the students show they have mastered the key vocabulary words.

## Preparing for Active Reading

Getting students ready to read materials involves providing background materials, information, and experiences. This preparation assists them in getting a mental set about what they are going to read, shows the relationship to other assignments they have read, and stimulates interest in the assignment by relating it to current interests and student experiences. In short, providing background information can increase reader motivation.

The social studies curriculum lends itself to different types of background activities. Some obvious examples include the use of films, filmstrips, and slide-tapes. Newsreels and war documentaries can introduce chapters on World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Some feature-length Hollywood productions deal with current events and social issues and can be effective in teaching current events, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Many teachers draw from their own collection of travel slides to provide background on various topics. Games are another way to provide background information for students. There are games to help students to understand other cultures, games that are based on the workings of nation states, and so forth. These could be used to present concepts and ideas and get students prepared for actual reading.

Other background activities include: field trips, debates, simulations, role playing, discussions, guest speakers, demonstrations, oral readings, presentation of data, "shock" statements, panel presentations, music, tape recordings, artifacts, works of art, charts, maps, cartoons, jokes, anecdotal stories, poems, riddles, photographs, classroom equipment, and other paraphernalia. Some of these ideas have limited applicability, but this list suggests the many different ways to get students involved in a reading assignment. The overuse of any of these techniques, strategies, and ideas can backfire and produce a "turned-off" effect. Before using any of these ideas, the following questions should be considered:

1. Does this approach relate to the overall goals and objectives of the lesson or unit?
2. Will it enhance the overall lesson?
3. Will it be a good use of teacher and student time?
4. Will it be appropriate for all students?
5. Will it be "old hat" or really something new and relevant?

6. What skills do the students and teacher need to get the most out of the approach?

7. Is this the best way of introducing the assignment?

If the answer to three or more of these questions is no, reconsider your choice of background material.

In Chapter 3 we look at what happens during reading, focusing on active reading behaviors (paraphrasing, summarizing, questioning, and so forth). We also examine the role of the social studies teacher in promoting these active reading behaviors.

# 3. ACTIVE READING BEHAVIORS

Social studies teachers, like other content area teachers, bristle when reading personnel or administrators tell them that they must incorporate reading into their traditionally conceived curricula. Once their panic subsides, social studies teachers usually are left wondering just how to go about it. The field of social studies is so complex that there is small wonder why these teachers feel stymied and confused.

More often than not, reading personnel jump to clarify the social studies teacher's predicament. Within minutes, a list of pertinent reading skills is produced. The list usually looks something like this:(24)

1. vocabulary
2. denotation
15. use of dictionary
25. use of globes
49. validity
64. imagery
81. symbolism
93. rate
99. accuracy

. . . and all the other 90 skills listed in between these.

With this approach, reading personnel produce lists of cures like pharmacists produce handfuls of pills. A better alternative is for the reading specialist and the social studies teacher to sit down together and analyze the materials that students are expected to read. On the basis of such an analysis, they can identify the skills students will need to handle the material successfully. Such analyses usually focus on the organization of the material, use of headings, the use of charts and graphs, the complexity of the sentence structures, difficult words, key words or concepts, the demand made on previous experience, and the motivation to read. This kind of analysis results in another list of skills the student needs for success in reading.

The second list has greater validity than the first one, because it at least reflects the actual problems presented by the assigned materials. However, even this second list is inadequate on two counts. First, such lists tacitly define reading as the reading process. A list of skills encourages teachers to believe that skill-related activities can teach students to read the material in question with comprehension and efficiency. The truth, however, is that students may only have learned the skills, for there is no assurance that the parts (skills) add up to the whole (reading). Second, there is no necessary correlation between acquisition of such skills and improved reading in the social studies classroom. Successful completion of skill lessons does not guarantee the student will subsequently handle assigned materials more satisfactorily. In short, a priori, before-the-fact treatments do not cure reading problems because they either overlook the nature of reading itself or confuse the result with the process that produces it.

The social studies teacher's quandry about how to teach reading should be approached from a very different perspective. A more workable approach can be found in greater focus on active reading behaviors. It is the proper role of the social studies teacher in teaching reading to promote, encourage, and facilitate student-produced evidence of genuine engagement in active reading behavior. In other words, social studies teachers, rather than relying on a priori cures, should attend to students' real reading behaviors and react to them. This, in contrast to the reading skills/skill lesson approach, may be called a posteriori. To paraphrase an old saying: when teachers attend to students' active reading behaviors, the proof is in the pudding, not in a list of ingredients drawn up before the pot is even put in the oven!

Evidence of active reading behavior would include the ability to make predictions, ask questions, vary one's reading rate, identify unknown words, summarize, diagram, and paraphrase. Note that these activities are the products of reading, not skills to be mastered prior to reading. While this list may look like any other catalogue of skills, it is different from such lists in several ways. First, these behaviors are palpable and observable proofs of reading comprehension accepted by social studies teachers who wish to determine what, in fact, their students have understood from the assigned readings. Given that standardized tests have problems of reliability and that end-of-unit examinations may test comprehension of class discussion more than reading comprehension, social studies teachers depend on such active reading behaviors to test understanding of assigned materials. If a student can accurately summarize a chapter of a book, the teacher can be assured that that student has understood the material.

There is another valuable distinction between active reading behaviors and reading skills. By focusing instruction on skills and subskills that may or may not be a sure indicator of reading comprehension, teachers draw the attention of students away from the real goal of reading: understanding what the text says about some subject. In the skills approach the process of reading supplants the purpose of reading. When the focus of instruction is on the purpose or goal of reading, the student is likely to be more highly motivated. Additionally, in the active reading method, the focus is on a valued, observable, and definable product like "paraphrase," rather than on a hazy, nebulous, indistinct concept like "comprehension." If the goal is for students to paraphrase a passage, there can be little doubt in the students' or teacher's mind about what constitutes the satisfactory accomplishment of that goal.

No longer able to hide behind the protective indefiniteness of concepts like "comprehension" and "the process of reading," teachers will no longer be able to say, "Oh, my kids can't read," or "My students don't have adequate decoding skills."

Instead, teachers might admit that their students cannot paraphrase well or cannot articulate pertinent questions about a passage. But these are manageable problems, more finite and more amenable to pedagogic remedies, than those problems conceived in terms of reading skills and processes. A focus on the evidence of reading behavior will remove some of the myths and the psychological mystique surrounding reading, and will help teachers fulfull their responsibility to teach students to read content materials with fluency and efficiency.

In the remainder of this chapter, several examples of active reading behaviors will be presented. Each behavior will be defined and its importance justified. There are suggestions on how to promote each behavior in the social studies classroom. These suggestions are in line with the new social studies curriculum guidelines (35a) which state, "Learning activities should engage the student directly and actively in the learning process" (p. 270). The activities described under this guideline—"making surveys; tabulating and interpreting data; acting out scripts; using reference tools; reading or writing poetry; role-playing; hearing and questioning classroom speakers; . . . brainstorming; . . . advocating a thought out position; . . . comparing points of view; studying social science books and articles; participating in discussions patterned on explicit strategies for behaviors such as communicating and valuing, and more" (p. 270)—are directly and indirectly touched on in the examples provided in this chapter. A concluding section discusses some special considerations and caveats.

## PARAPHRASE

### Definition

What it means to paraphrase a passage can perhaps best be known by understanding what it is not. Paraphrasing is not editing or interpreting or summarizing. When students paraphrase, they should not excise, delete, expand, or emphasize parts of the original text. Rather, they should simply restate the original in their own words. In so doing, they should respect the organization and elaboration of the original material. In both length and content, there should be a close correspondence between the original passage and the student's paraphrase of it.

Within the context of social studies, paraphrases generally will be of four kinds: oral to oral, oral to written, written to written, and written to oral. The teacher should recognize, however, that paraphrases by their very nature are limited; no written passage of great length can be expeditiously paraphrased, and no lengthy oral passage can be remembered in sufficient detail to permit accurate paraphrase. Thus, we use paraphrase to mean restating a word, phrase, sentence, or portion of a paragraph in one's own words.

### Why Teach Paraphrasing?

The ability to paraphrase is important because it allows the student to practice a basic communication skill. This skill in turn can be used in other content areas as a building block for similar skills. For example, the ability to paraphrase a written or oral message can help the student move toward summarizing a passage. The student's ability to paraphrase also signals to the teacher that the student has a literal

knowledge of the material. Finally, paraphrasing makes the text more relevant to the student, because the original text is cast into familiar words and a personal frame of reference.

## How to Teach Paraphrasing

Arthur Heilman (23) suggests that the ability to paraphrase depends on the ability to think in *thought units*. If the students are weak in this area, the teacher can help by choosing passages and dividing them into thought units. After students have had some experience in paraphrasing material that has been divided in this way, they can divide their own material. At first, students should actually write out the thought units on which their paraphrasing is based. Gradually, as the process is repeated, this way of looking at materials will become automatic.

Take this sentence as an example: "The general stands alone, high on a bluff, lost in the visions of previous battles and endless campaigns, alone upon uneven ground; the tall trees, the deep gorges, for all he knows, not there." This sentence may be divided into the following thought units: high on a bluff . . . lost in the thoughts . . . of previous battles . . . endless campaigns . . . alone . . . upon uneven ground . . . the tall trees . . . the deep gorges . . . for all he knows . . . not there.

A student who has read the thought units may paraphrase the original sentence in this way: "The general is standing on the top of a mountain, and he is so busy thinking about past campaigns that he does not see the scenery below him." A second student may paraphrase it differently: "As the general stands on the mountaintop, he can see the world below him. It is a world full of conflict, and the trees and gorges that he sees below him might as well not even be there." The second student reads the term "visions" as something the general sees as he stands on the mountaintop ("he can see the world below him . . . "), whereas the first student interpreted the word "visions" to mean the thoughts inside the general's head (" . . . he is so busy thinking about past campaigns that he does not see . . . ").

When such diversity of interpretation occurs, it provides a natural opportunity to teach students how to interpret critically what they read. In such exercises the teacher must be careful, however, to avoid criticizing students' paraphrases, for their paraphrases show not only how they interpret the material but also how they read it. A paraphrase can reveal reading problems very precisely because it can demonstrate students' use of syntax, use of vocabulary, and, as Heilman says, ability to express themselves. Also, if students have a chance to hear several interpretations of the same passage, they will learn to think about their own choices and improve their ability to paraphrase.

Another technique for teaching paraphrasing is to ask students to *pair up and select a controversial issue*. One student in the dyad takes the pro side, and the other argues against the issue. Each student then writes down a list of reasons to support his or her position. At this point one student reads the pro list of supporting statements, while the other student paraphrases after each statement is read. The student who has trouble remembering the statement can read the other student's statement. In this way, students have two means, listening or reading, to practice paraphrasing.

A third teaching technique involves the paraphrasing of *historic documents* such as the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, the Seneca Falls Declaration, and so on. These documents carry heavy conceptual

loads, and the student must be able to paraphrase short phrases as well as statements made up of one or more sentences. For example, "Four score and seven years ago . . . " can be paraphrased as, "Eighty-seven years ago . . . ." Social studies teachers can vary this activity by asking pupils to paraphrase different kinds of materials.

The social studies teacher can observe paraphrasing behavior in a variety of ways. One way is to listen carefully as students do oral paraphrase activities like the values clarification activity described above. Class discussions provide a second opportunity: can students restate questions and statements made by the teacher or by other students? Third, the teacher can note how well students are able to restate directions. In social studies, directions come in many forms, from written assignments to role playing. Fourth, the teacher can make written assignments in which students are asked to do paraphrase activities. For example, students in a current events class can be asked to select a newspaper or magazine story, underline one sentence in each paragraph, and provide a paraphrase of that sentence. Fifth, the teacher can informally observe whether students use paraphrasing during casual conversations.

### Some Final Considerations

As teachers focus attention on paraphrasings, it is important to note the following:

1. It does not mean to parrot back something verbatim.
2. It does not mean to interpret or summarize.
3. It has only certain uses in social studies.

This last point needs to be expanded. Social studies generally requires the reading of large quantities of written material, and paraphrasing plays only a minor role in this type of assignment. However, in assignments dealing with historical documents such as the Constitution, where each word, phrase, and sentence is analyzed carefully, paraphrasing can play a significant role. It also has a definite role in discussions, values clarification activities, and other activities that call for the student to restate questions, directions, and statements.

## SUMMARY

### Definition

Summary is both more and less elastic than paraphrase. A summary, unlike a paraphrase, freely employs the same words and sentences as its source, but varies greatly from the source in amount of detail and length. A summary is more creative than a paraphrase in that it selects essential material, deletes peripheral material, and may rearrange and prioritize material in a manner different from its source.

Summaries may take different forms depending upon their purpose. A summary may be only a list of topics or issues mentioned in a piece of writing. Or it may

be an outline or synopsis, in the same way that a sketch gives the basic outlines of a portrait. One summary might reflect the reader's expectations and the ways in which these expectations are met; another summary might reflect an author's stated goals and the degree to which these are met. The internal organization of a piece of writing might form the basis of one summary; the ramifications or extensions of an article or chapter might determine the nature of another kind of summary. For social studies teachers, it is useful to acknowledge that summaries will usually be based on chapters or articles rather than on longer pieces of writing.

### Why Teach Summarizing?

Summaries can help both student and teacher in a number of ways. Since summaries focus attention on key concepts, they can help a student organize thoughts, promote retention of significant details, provide automatic review of material, and increase motivation—since the "nugget of knowledge" expressed in the summary is a tangible byproduct of the studying/summarizing process. Summaries also help students reduce a complex, elaborate text to the level of mnemonic manageability. For teachers, student summaries can be used as clear indices of reading comprehension, as diagnostic devices that give clues to students' reading difficulties, and as good preparatory assignments before examinations.

### How to Teach Summarizing

To discover whether students are able to summarize, it is probably best for the individual teacher to simply assign a passage to read and ask students to write a short summary of it. If their summaries are merely collections of details, they need help in two summary skills: *notetaking* and *outlining*.

*Step I:* Working as a class or in small groups, students should read and paraphrase each sentence in a paragraph. When they are finished with the paragraph, they should agree on the main idea of the paragraph and write it down.

*Step II:* Now close the book and work with the paraphrased sentences. Which sentences go together to support an important concept? What is the concept? Write it down. Write down each important concept on which the class agrees.

*Step III:* The resulting summary sentences could be used, then, as the basis of an outline of the material. For example:

I. _____

(Write the first summary sentence.)

1. _____

(Write a supporting sentence.)

2. _____

(Write another supporting sentence.)

II. _____

(Write the second summary sentence.)

An exercise in *writing headlines* is another good way to help students learn to write summary sentences. The teacher cuts articles from the newspaper and gives them to students without the headlines. When the students have each written a headline, the teacher writes the actual headline on the blackboard and sees which student has come closest to duplicating it. When students have learned to do this for newspaper articles, social studies assignments can be used. This exercise is especially useful in history assignments, where most of the information first appeared as a headline in some newspaper. For other social studies topics, students might enjoy writing titles for editorials, by-line columns, or feature stories.

Various kinds of summary exercises can be applied to different kinds of social studies materials. Taking the Gettysburg Address as an example, students could list Lincoln's points: past, present, and future aims of the Republic. They might summarize the organization of the speech: the spatial and temporal references that relate Lincoln's immediate context to wider issues and concerns, both present and past. They might make their summary reflect Lincoln's purpose: how he provided a motive for continuing to fight the Civil War. Or they could discuss in their summaries the ramifications or extensions that can be drawn from the speech: the relationship between personal commitment and democratic governance. Such a series of exercises would take students through a hierarchically arranged system of conceptualizations. And students would thereby gain a sense of how summarization can serve a number of purposes.

Observation of students' summarizing skills is quite easy. Depending on the kind of summary involved, social studies teachers can check summaries against texts for accuracy and completeness. In discussions, almost all questions other than those that focus on specific knowledge of individual details require some display of summarization. More informally, teachers may observe student summary skills in almost any casual conversation or exchange. And attentive teachers can note whether or not summary skills improve after formal instruction in this technique.

### Some Final Considerations

Summaries do have their dangers. Overemphasis on summarization can encourage oversimplification of material. Second, summaries lend themselves too easily to memorization and do not necessarily correlate with more complex thinking processes. Teacher reliance on summaries can result in teaching toward the test rather than toward development of cognitive abilities that permit learning both inside and outside the classroom. Perhaps it is best, particularly in the social studies, for teachers to remember that summaries, as they strip articles and chapters to their essential features, are best used as the basis for the kind of interdisciplinary explorations that mark the highest level of student understanding.

## PREDICTIONS

### Definition

The ability to predict is one of the basic skills required for higher levels of reading comprehension. To predict means simply to suggest outcomes on the basis of limited information. In social studies, this information may come either from a

preview of the reading passage or from the student's own experience of things related to the text. Obviously, depending upon the amount of information known, the prediction will be either more or less apparent, more or less of a "wild guess." Predictions can be appropriate or inappropriate. One of the goals of the social studies teacher is to enable students to come up with accurate and appropriate hypotheses on the basis of limited prior information.

## Why Teach Predicting?

In social studies curricula, the challenge of predicting outcomes can lend an element of curiosity and intrigue to the reading matter. Students who are interested enough to make a prediction about what will come later in the text have a personal stake in the material. They are motivated. In history, economics, and political science, the ability to make predictions helps students identify and follow trends and tendencies. Predictions also promote intelligent guessing and intuitive thinking. Both these skills represent higher levels of cognition. Finally, students' predictions have diagnostic value for the teacher; if students can make accurate and appropriate predictions based on an introductory reading passage, the teacher is assured they have probably understood the material thoroughly.

## How to Teach Predicting

Prediction can be conceived of in two ways: text-based and life-based. With predictions based on texts, teachers may employ a *study skills method*, like SQ3R, in which key indicators (titles, subtitles, topic sentences, italicized words, boldface print, etc.) are previewed. Students then make predictions about the content and/or argumentative drift of the passage in question. The accuracy of the predictions will indicate both to students and teachers whether or not students are making skillful use of these key indicators to maximize reading comprehension. As students grow more skilled in this technique, the length of the passage and the predictive difficulty can be increased. (This method is closely related to the hypothesis-experiment technique common to physical and biological sciences.)

Where expository materials do not include a preface statement, the *first paragraph* should establish the subject and can be read for predictive purposes. Before reading the remainder of the passage, students should be asked to predict the outcome and write down their predictions. When the students complete the reading, they can compare their predictions with the author's outcome. Since expository materials are generally written in a straightforward, logical manner, they lend themselves well to this kind of exercise. Students who cannot readily make appropriate predictions on this level of literal inference will need more practice in this method.

The process of making accurate and appropriate predictions can be given real meaning by relating predictions to life-based criteria. Social studies teachers might draw upon readings about a famous and controversial historical figure—Aaron Burr, for example. After reading introductory material about Burr's character, students can be asked to predict the outcome of his career. If the introductory material stresses Burr's ambition, success, and volatile temperament, students may be able to predict a tragic outcome just from what they know about life: that great ability coupled with high self-esteem often produce tragic results. One interesting

thing about this method is that the students' predictions may be more logical than the actual outcome; the disjunction between the prediction and the outcome serves to illustrate the capriciousness of many of social studies topics and provides another direction for discussion.

To observe students making predictions, social studies teachers need only set a stage conducive to predictive behavior. Teachers can increase student confidence by gradually raising the level of the material from which students make predictions. Also, teachers should make sure that the relative distance between the information given in the reading and the projected outcome is adjusted to the ability levels of individual students.

### Some Final Considerations

Making predictions, like all other active reading behaviors, can pose problems. For instance, overemphasis on this activity might lead students to read only for what they expect to find, thereby increasing the possibility that they will overlook interesting and important details that don't fit into their predictions. More seriously, inaccurate predictions might lead students to misinterpret what they read. And repeated failure to have expectations met by outcomes may result in frustration and disappointment for the student. In short, social studies teachers must oversee carefully any exercises in which students are asked to make predictions from their readings.

## ASKING QUESTIONS

### Definition

Usually we think of questioning in relation to tests and exams. In this context questions are designed to elicit various kinds of information from the student. At their most complex, such questions may encourage students to reorganize and interrelate the discrete items of information they have learned. Questions, in terms of active reading behavior, direct or guide students toward learning facts or concepts on various levels of difficulty. In this context asking questions is a focusing or guiding activity, not a testing or checking activity.

The best kinds of questions for students to ask as they read are enumerated in Bloom's taxonomy.(6) They include questions that focus on matters of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

### Why Teach Question-Asking?

When students read with some questions already in mind, they are less likely to be distracted and are much more likely to focus productively on important aspects of the text. Students who read to answer questions they have formulated for themselves are more actively engaged in the reading process. They are more conscious of the purpose of reading and read more critically. When question-asking becomes an automatic and incorporated part of the student's reading behavior, that student reads more effectively and efficiently.

### How to Teach Question-Asking

The easiest way to teach this behavior is to ask students to take text headings, subheadings, titles, and captions and turn them into questions. A specific heading, "Four Causes of Monetary Slumps," can be easily turned into a question: What are the four causes of monetary slumps? Students can then read the paragraph or passage with a clear idea of what they are trying to find out. A more general heading, "The Suffrage Movement," can likewise be turned into questions: When was the Suffrage Movement? or Who was involved in the Suffrage Movement? or What progress was made as a result of the Suffrage Movement?

At a more abstract level, students can be led to ask questions that compare, contrast, analyze, and synthesize aspects of the material they have read. For example, with a chapter entitled "Four Models of the Mind: Freud, Jung, Erikson, and Ausubel," students might ask: How is Freud's model like Jung's? or How does Erikson's model differ from Freud's? or What features are unique to each model? or What are some characteristics common to all models of the mind?

To reinforce and observe this particular kind of active reading behavior, social studies teachers might want to use Bloom's taxonomy of questions and gradually lead pupils to ask questions of greater and greater conceptual difficulty. In time, a student will be able to ask an "evaluation" question of great complexity (for example, What criteria can I use to evaluate the relative worth or utility of these models of the mind? or How do these models compare with each other when evaluated by the criteria I have selected?). Social studies teachers should view the ability to ask questions as a hierarchy of conceptual skills that may progressively be applied to reading passages to elicit increasingly complex levels of meaning and understanding.

### Some Final Considerations

Question-asking can slow the reader's progress through a text. Clearly, not every heading or caption should be used to form questions, only the more important key indicators. Question-asking may diminish the innate pleasure of reading if used excessively. A concentration on lower-level questions, to the exclusion of higher-level questions, will leave students mired in petty details; the converse will leave students with many generalizations but no details to support them. In short, teachers should be careful in encouraging this active reading behavior for it, like other behaviors, can have ill effects when used excessively.

## DIAGRAMS

### Definition

If you observe your students as they study a lesson, you may note that the better students study with pencils in hand and stop occasionally to sketch a drawing or outline in the margins or on notepaper. These students have learned to use diagrams to aid understanding and help themselves remember their reading assignments.

Diagrams are defined here as any device by which the student can translate

reading or speaking into a visual pattern. Diagrams, then, may include sketches, drawings, charts, illustrations, outlines, floor plans, maps, time-lines, and so on. Three types of information can be visualized: (1) chronological (time order), (2) spatial (shows differences from area to area), and (3) expository (organizes information to show relationships between ideas or facts, such as cause and effect, classification, hierarchy, etc.).

## Why Teach Diagramming?

We have discussed the research by Weisberg (53) and Hall (21) that shows that when expository information is organized visually, student performance is significantly higher. Some types of information (e.g., spatial) can be learned only by visual representation. For example, could a student learn the position of Alaska relative to mainland U.S.A. without ever seeing a map? Research has shown that most students have difficulty with temporal relationships until the age of 14 or 15. Teachers, might be able to help these students understand historical events by putting this information into some visual pattern such as a time-line or an outline. Likewise, students can bette understand the relationships between objects, events, and concepts when these elements are placed into some type of visual scheme such as a structured overview or a classification design.

Even when students can learn information from the narrative, a diagram can reinforce this learning. Diagrams also provide a quick reference for review. A fast glance at a drawing can often serve to review a whole chapter of expository description. The most useful diagrams are those constructed by the student. Therefore, it is valuable to teach students to make their own diagrams wherever possible. As Cyrus F. Smith, Jr. says: (42)

> A major obstacle in the optimal use of the structured overview often appears when the teacher initially presents it. Teachers, in their haste to get on with the lesson, do not allow the structured overview to develop as a readiness device. Specifically, the teacher tells the students about the relationships between the words and terms rather than allowing the students to discuss and explore these relationships among themselves. By taking this approach, the teacher can short-circuit the students' attempt to use the structured overview as a pre-reading experience.

## How to Teach Diagramming

There are so many types of information that can be organized visually and so many methods for organizing this information, it is impossible to cover them all here. Instead, we will attempt to describe some steps the teacher can follow to teach students to construct and use diagrams during the process of reading. Some examples follow this list.

1. Choose a passage you think is important, one not already illustrated by the text.

2. Ask students to read the passage and then draw a diagram of what they have read. You may want them to work individually or in small groups. Base your decision on the students' ability and the difficulty of the passage.

3. As the students read and draw the diagrams, divide the chalkboard into three sections. Label the sections:
   a. *Time order*—arrange the events as they occurred.
   b. *Space order*—show the area about which you have read.
   c. *Relationships*—show how one event, object, person, or idea is related to another.

4. When the students have finished Step 2, draw their attention to the categories on the board. Explain briefly the three types of diagrams the students might have drawn.

5. Ask each student (or one student from each group) to come to the board and reproduce the diagram he or she has created. Emphasize that the diagram does not need to be a work of art, but simply a way to make the information easier to understand and remember.

6. After a diagram has been drawn on the board, ask the class to decide whether this diagram represents "time order," "space order," or "relationship." Keep score for each type of diagram. If one type is not used, the class should try to think of some way to use that method. Some passages may not lend themselves to all three categories; for your initial exercises, try to choose passages that do.

7. As the students show their different types of diagrams (maps, charts, illustrations, time-lines, etc.) make a list of these. Then ask the class to think through their list and find still other types.

8. As a final step, ask students to write a narrative that describes the diagram they have made.

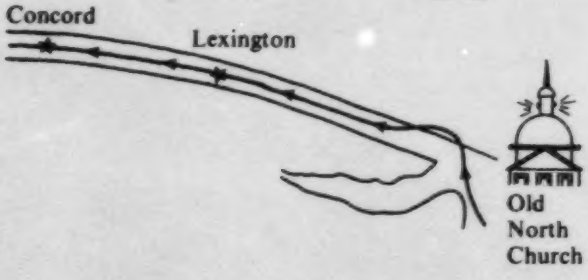
As an example of the different kinds of diagrams that could be made from a single social studies reading, consider the story of Paul Revere's ride. Students might draw the following types of diagrams:

*Time-line*

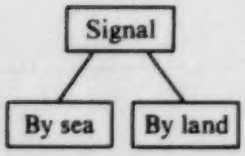
Time

| Events | Paul waits for the signal | Signal from church tower | Ride begins | Lexington | Concord | First shot |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

*Spatial order*



*Relationship of Events*




There are many related activities that can reinforce diagram drawing. For example, teachers might choose a passage for which the author has constructed some type of visual. Reproduce the passage so the students can read it without seeing the visual. Then ask them to draw a visual that explains what they learned in the passage. Finally, let them see the text visual and let them compare it with their own diagram. Another approach is to have students decide whether a visual that appears in the text represents time order, spatial order, or relationship.

### Some Final Considerations

Diagrams can have two basic flaws: oversimplification and misrepresentation of relationships. A simple time-line might overemphasize sequential or diachronic history to the exclusion of synchronic or in-depth history. Likewise, an out-of-scale map can mislead students. If Persia is drawn comparable in size to Long Island, the adventures of Alexander the Great will seem petty. In short, as students try their hands at diagramming, teachers must oversee their efforts.

## IDENTIFYING UNKNOWN WORDS

### Definition

Every word in a passage makes a special contribution to the meaning of that passage. A critical reader knows this and will skid to a halt when confronted with an unfamiliar word or one that does not make sense in the context of the selection. In this definition, then, "unknown words" refer to (1) outright unknowns (that is, words whose configurations and meanings are not known), (2) words that the student has seen in context but to which he or she does not attach meaning, (3) words that the student can use orally but does not recognize in print, and (4) misconceived words (those to which the student attaches a wrong meaning, given the context).

### Why Teach the Identification of Unknown Words?

In Chapter 2 we discussed how the student can reduce the number of unknown words by making some "educated guesses" as to which words are most likely to cause trouble. Since the list of unknown words will be different for each student, these activities, though important, are only a partial answer. Ultimately the student must take the responsibility for recognizing unfamiliar words or words that do not "fit." The teacher can make the student more aware of the importance of stopping to examine these words and can provide practice in doing so.

## How to Teach the Identification of Unknown Words

Before beginning, the teacher must determine how efficient the students are at choosing words for study. Ask the students to read through a passage and list the words that are not well known, especially those that are most important to the meaning of the passage. Then choose a list of key words from that passage and ask the students to explain what these words mean. Check to see if the words that they could not explain were on their own lists of unknown words. It is important that this step be done with each student on an individual basis. Or erase the students' names from their lists and make transparencies of the lists for the overhead projector, so classmates can begin to look critically at each other's choices.

Once the teacher is sure the students know how to choose unknown words, the teacher should ask pupils to keep a notebook of the words they do not know. Periodic observations of students' reading habits will determine if they stop occasionally to look up unfamiliar words. The teacher can also periodically check on students' knowledge of the key vocabulary of an assigned reading passage; when words are missed, the students and teacher both will have a clue that pupils are not stopping to learn the new words.

Small group work is often valuable to students because it allows students to see that classmates have the same types of difficulties, and helps students discover it is all right to admit there is something they do not know. Small group work also offers students a chance to "brainstorm," to see how ideas can be expanded in discussions with others. Friendly competition among groups can add to the interest and make these exercises more fun than work.

Teachers and students will no doubt think of many ways to use small groups to reinforce these activities, but here is one model that can be followed:

1. Choose a passage you want students to learn well.

2. After all students have read the passage, divide into small groups. Each group is responsible for choosing a list of key words that are unknown.

3. Ask students in the groups to discuss the meanings of the words, then to construct a game or activity that will test the ability of the rest of the class to use these words.

4. Let the groups exchange games or activities and try to complete them. Give token awards to the groups that construct the best game/tests.

## Some Final Considerations

In a sense, the identification of unknown words is probably the single most important step in improving reading skills. If a key word remains a mystery to students or if their interpretation of an unknown word is muddled, chances are they will not understand the passage or will misperceive the author's intention. The example comes to mind of a politician some years ago who campaigned in a largely illiterate section of our own country. He charged his opponent with "practicing monogamy." Those constituents who were stumped by the word monogamy probably thought it was a euphemism for something vile. (The opponent lost the election!) Clearly, all teachers must stress the identification of unknown words so that students may be freed from the tyranny of misconception.

## VARIED READING RATES

### Definition

Students should be able to change their reading rates to suit the material or the purpose for reading. Some behaviors intended to increase speed are skimming (getting the most out of a passage), scanning (reading to locate specific facts or ideas), and even skipping sections of a passage. Behaviors designed for slowing down include rereading, reading and reflecting (stopping at the end of a sentence, paragraph, or section to think over what has just been read), notetaking, and underlining. All of these are occasionally useful in reading social studies materials.

### Why Teach Varying Reading Rate?

It is important to teach students how to vary reading rate for the following reasons:

1. There is not enough time to have students read everything we would like them to read.
2. It is a way to optimize the students' time and energy.
3. It helps teachers and students prioritize what is important.
4. There are different demands or emphases appropriate to different materials and assignments.

All of these reasons have relevance in the social studies curriculum.

Most of the reading material used by students in the first few years of school is of the narrative (storytelling) type. The stories are based on familiar childhood experiences, so few new concepts or ideas are presented. New words are taught one by one, and each word is carefully reinforced in the stories. Students are encouraged to increase their fluency and speed.

In the intermediate and upper grades, when students are exposed for the first time to expository material (that is, material that explains), they often try to read this new material in the same way they read the old, narrative material. When the number of new concepts or unknown words becomes too great, the students bog down, much as a novice would when reading a law book. The problem is not that students cannot read, only that they have not learned to read the new kind of material.

Social studies assignments should not all be read at the same rate. Some assignments that introduce many new concepts and new vocabulary should be read slowly and carefully, paying particular attention to the meaning of new words and rereading difficult passages. Students often skim over other assigned reading, such as supplementary materials, so they can decide which parts they want to read more carefully. When reports are assigned, students must know how to scan—to cover large amounts of material to find specific bits of information.

If students cannot vary their reading rates, they will be working at low efficiency. Grades will drop and motivation will be poor.

## How to Teach Varying Reading Rate

The teacher should begin with a simple explanation of the different rates by which a student can read social studies materials. These explanations might be posted in the room for ready reference:

- *Skimming*—Going over the selection quickly, getting the main ideas. When you skim, you will answer the question: What is the selection about? This will take no more than five minutes.

- *Scanning*—Looking through the passage for the answer to a specific question. Learn to look for key words, names, dates, etc.

- *Skipping*—Looking through a chapter or a book but omitting sections that are not relevant to the assignment.

- *Careful reading*—Slowing down, rereading passages; when necessary, looking up definitions of unknown words; taking notes on or underlining the main ideas of the selection; reading and reflecting.

The teacher explains each of these activities to the students, then gives them an opportunity to practice each behavior. For example, when explaining *skimming*, choose a selection from the text and give students a few minutes to look at it. Then ask them to close their books and tell what the selection is about. Ask them to explain what they did when they skimmed. Show them how to depend on headings, subheadings, and key concept words to get general ideas about the selection. A good practice exercise is to write these headings, subheadings, and key words on the blackboard, making an outline of the selection. Change each heading and subheading into a question. Discuss possible answers to these questions as found in the selection.

When practicing *scanning*, ask students a question that can be answered by reading the selection. See which student can be the first to find the answer. Then talk about what key words they looked for to find the answer. To vary this exercise, ask a few students to look for questions to ask the rest of the class. For example, suppose students choose to ask: When was the Battle of Bull Run? The fact that the question begins with "when" should signal to classmates that they are looking for a date.

When practicing *skipping*, go through a chapter and point out sections that are not necessary to read for the assignment. For example, if you are studying only the political causes that led up to a war, you would exclude those pages where social and economic causes are discussed.

When practicing *notetaking* and *underlining*, give the students a short assignment from the text. When they have finished reading it, discuss the amount of time it took them to read the material. Have them read the notes and underlined portions of the text they thought deserved special attention. Teachers will soon be able to determine if pupils are finding the main ideas in their reading assignments.

When practicing *rereading*, ask students to read short passages from the assignment that are critical to understanding the larger context from which the passage was taken. Ask students to read the short passage and paraphrase it; then have them go back over the passage to see if they have missed some important point. Typically, an introductory paragraph is good for this kind of exercise.

When practicing *reading and reflecting*, give students one-page reading assignments that deal with a single topic. After students read through the passage, they should reflect back on what they just read. It is helpful to get students to work in pairs in this exercise, so they can discuss what they have read and reflected upon. (You may want to start with a shorter passage, depending upon the material to be discussed.)

When students know how to vary their reading rates, every social studies assignment should include instructions on how it is to be read. Do you want students to skim over the material to get the general idea, or do you want the material to be read carefully? Do you want pupils to read every single page in a chapter? You make the decision because the preferred reading rate depends upon the concepts you are trying to develop in your students. If students are asked to read carefully, be sure that the assignments are not too long. Check their notes. Let students know that you are more concerned with what they have learned than with how many pages they have read. This is especially helpful for poor readers; they will cover less material but will feel more comfortable when they realize that they are nonetheless boosting their reading skills.

Use the notes you took while observing students' reading rates to plan reinforcement activities. Divide the class into small groups according to the skill(s) they have not yet mastered. Have them devise ways of helping each other learn to skim, to scan, or to read slowly and carefully. You can also reinforce these behaviors when you want students to review for a test.

### Some Final Considerations

Of course, it is crucial to match reading rate with its most suitable, appropriate material. It would be frustrating for students to try to skim or scan material with a particularly dense conceptual load. Likewise, students are bored when asked to do close reading of simple narrative passages. As in all active reading behaviors, varied reading rate requires the teacher to exercise both specialized knowledge and common sense.

## CONCLUSION

While active reading behaviors and reading skills may in fact be synonymous in conception, in execution they are at opposite ends of the reading process. Reading skills are invariably conceived as prereading techniques used to prepare students for the deciphering of meaning; active reading behaviors are observed during and after the process of reading. By focusing on what students do *while* reading, social studies teachers can break out of the trap imposed by a strictly psychological view of the reading process. When reading responsibility is seen in terms of encouraging active reading behaviors, it is no longer difficult to incorporate reading into the social studies curriculum.

# 4. ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter addresses some of the concerns frequently raised by social studies teachers. We, too, have wrestled with these concerns, and the opinions voiced here are based on a number of years of teaching experience. The three concerns we have chosen to address are described and clarified from the teacher's point of view. This statement of the problem is followed by a number of suggestions we hope will be helpful and practical.

## ATTENDING TO THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AND MAINSTREAMING

### The Concern

Social studies teachers, like other subject area teachers, are concerned about their students, and usually this concern encompasses everything from intellectual development to social/psychological maturity and welfare. For this reason, social studies teachers constantly worry about and work toward attending to the individual. Already frustrated by not being able to attend adequately to 135 individuals each day, the thought of also being responsible for mainstreamed handicapped students is distressing.

As a result, it is not uncommon to hear statements like these:

### Teacher Statement

"Look, all you say sounds good. I can tentatively agree that my responsibility is to promote active reading behavior. But when I get into my class, the reality is that I have 135 students each day, frequently three preparations. I do not have time to focus on the reticent, unmotivated, poorly-skilled student on a one-to-one basis. Now because of P.L. 94-142, I will be faced with students who need even more specialized help. How am I going to help these kids when I already have more than I can handle?"

### Interpreting the Teacher's Statement

"My teacher training did not prepare me for working with the 'special' student.

Why shouldn't I feel insecure when I am asked to do a job without proper training or special materials? I am doing the best I can, and my teaching day is filled now. I usually take work home. How am I going to find the extra time I need to prepare for and work with these students? We are ignoring our bright students now, and if I have to spend even more time with the slow students, there will be less time to spend with the bright ones. With these unmotivated students in the classroom, I have to spend so much time keeping order that little time is left for good teaching."

## Our Response

We know that most social studies teachers spend many hours after class in preparation and paper correcting. We also recognize that very little in teacher training has prepared teachers for the new tasks being asked of them. In truth, given the current structure of most secondary schools (the use of time, the way people work together, class size, and the use of space and resources), we too approach this concern with limited optimism. There is no magic wand that will instantly solve these problems. Nevertheless, we offer the following suggestions. Knowing your own methods and the constraints of your own situation, you can choose those ideas that might work in your classroom.

***Small Groups.*** Several of the activities suggested in Chapter 3 involved the use of small groups within your class. Admittedly, the room will not be silent when groups are working, and there will be times when not every student is attending to the task at hand. The slower students may tend to sit back and let the good students do the work unless the activities are planned and executed in a way that ensures that everyone must contribute.

There are some important advantages, however, in small group work: (1) Reading is an active, not a passive, behavior. Discussion of what is read forces the student to act on the information. Small groups offer more students a chance to participate in these discussions, and most people feel fairly comfortable about talking in a small group. In addition, comprehension is greatly enhanced when the student can hear several interpretations of the same information. (2) Nonreaders can benefit from taking an active part in the small group, even if their reading is limited to following along as the other students read. Nonreaders can still take part in the discussions and in group decision making. (3) Peer pressure is greater in small groups. Nonmotivated students may respond to the demands of their "group" even if they do not respond to demands of the teacher.

***Helping Groups.*** Teachers can involve the brighter students in the reading program by assigning them to helping groups. Some teachers feel that this is taking advantage of the bright students. We disagree for three reasons: (1) Teaching is one of the best ways to learn something. In order to teach information, one must learn it well, choose facts that are relevant, and organize these facts into a pattern that will be easy for others to learn. (2) Asking bright students to help teach others is a good ego boost for them. Students who do "just enough to get by" may do more if they know that teachers depend upon them. (3) The responsibility for making important social decisions eventually falls to our most intelligent citizens. People often complain that today's students cannot take responsibility. Instead of condemning these students, we should give them responsibilities and take the time to teach them to carry through. Helping groups is one approach.

Helping groups do not always need to be made up of the better students. Less able students also need to learn how to organize information and take responsibility; they also need ego boosts. Designing ways to use these students in helping groups is more of a challenge, but it is a worthwhile project.

***Helping Poor Readers.*** Some students' behavior problems are based in their inability to read class assignments. Suppose a teacher calmly and uncritically takes this student aside and says, "I know you are smart, but I also know that you do not read well. Let's work together and see if we can help you get good grades in this class. I will help by trying to get reading materials you can handle, or by cutting down the amount you have to read, or by showing you ways to help yourself learn to read the material better. You must help by working hard and by telling me when you have special problems with assignments."

Once this student's "secret" is out in the open, he or she no longer needs to hide behind mischievous or sullen behavior. Before trying this, the teacher must be prepared to make adjustments in the student's assignments. It is advisable to have a few proven techniques up your sleeve for helping this student make a good start in reading improvement.

***Attending to the "Twilight Zone."*** In addition to the students whom experts and the law say should be mainstreamed, there is another student population that truly needs help. These are the unmotivated students who seem to be in class for reasons other than to learn. These students are probably uncomfortable with the teacher, with student leaders, and with those students who "please" the teacher. Some teachers classify these students as dull, slow learners who deserve a D grade for attendance. Some say these students are in a "twilight zone," for they add nothing to the classroom; they seem just to exist.

Two approaches might be helpful: (1) *Advocacy*. Like all of us, these students respond to sincere, open concern and support. They respond positively when someone publicly and privately takes their side as they do class-related tasks and activities. At times it is as simple as saying to others, "I was impressed by _____" or "Some of you don't know this, but the person who first thought of this was _____." (2) *Set expectations*. It has already been mentioned that plans for the poor reader should include reduced or adjusted expectations. These "twilighters" may need the same consideration, for in truth they may be poor readers. Twilighters need to have firm expectations set, and these expectations must push the student beyond current performance. These students should not be given permission to do little or nothing. Such nonexpectations are an insult and do nothing positive for the twilighter's self-concept.

## THE TEACHER'S PLACE IN THE READING PROGRAM

### The Concern

Social studies teachers often voice a dual concern over two questions related to reading instruction in their content area: (1) What role, if any, should they play in the overall reading program of the school? and (2) What ways can they use and work with support personnel in the school (i.e., the reading teacher)? A social studies teacher might express these concerns through statements like the following.

### Teacher Statement

"Every year there seems to be a new set of priorities in my school. Last year it was establishing a guide program; two years ago, career education; and three years ago, reading in the content areas. In addition, last year my school district, in response to the cry to improve reading, hired a reading person for our school. I think we were sold a bill of goods. To date I have seen little improvement in student performance in my class, even though some of my students have spent hours working with this person."

### Interpreting the Teacher's Statement

"I was trained to teach social studies, not reading! When will they stop adding new responsibilities to my job? I have enough to do just getting through my own materials. Students should already know how to read before they come to my social studies classroom. What's the use of hiring a reading teacher if I have to teach reading and serve on a schoolwide reading committee? I'm already on too many committees as it is. If I just wait it out, they will be pushing something different. I wonder if they used the social studies budget to hire this reading specialist, even when we need another social studies teacher and more social studies textbooks. I can't see that this reading teacher has accomplished anything; at least, I don't see any results with my students."

### Our Response

***Teaching Reading.*** If you consider the teaching of reading to mean teaching a set of skills, we agree that this should not be your job. Methods classes have not trained you for this. However, suppose you view the teaching of reading as simply a way to help students respond to the printed material that you assign? Social studies teachers depend heavily on the medium of print to teach their subject. Doesn't it make sense, then, to be concerned about the way in which students respond to this printed material? Your positive attitude toward reading will transfer to the students, and this attitude will often be carried over to other subject areas.

***Committees.*** This transfer of attitudes will be even more complete if this new view of reading is accepted in every class; each subject will reinforce the learning done in the other classes. The only way this program can be accomplished is through communication among all the other members of your staff. That's right, more committee meetings. However, if you know that all teachers are doing their part, you are assured your time will not be wasted. Communication will also reduce redundancy so that every teacher is not doing the same activity at the same time. The committee also allows you to share information about the degree to which students are prepared to enter into a particular assignment. This can be very helpful in planning instruction. In short, the committee can provide a place where teachers can share ideas for activities and work toward common goals.

***The Reading Teacher.*** If the reading specialist in your school has not been helpful, perhaps it is because you have not requested help. This person can be a

valuable resource in two ways: (1) by working with teachers to develop a curriculum that uses reading activities to get to the content more effectively, and (2) by working with students who show reading problems in the classroom. If these functions are not being fulfilled, this resource person is not working effectively.

This reading specialist can also work (along with the school principal) to establish and maintain a viable reading committee and reading program within the school, providing the technical expertise about the process of reading as it relates to social studies and the other content areas. A reading committee can only be established if there is some general agreement as to the purpose and function of this committee and a reward structure for serving on such a committee.

It is useful at this point to look at some suggestions for working with the school reading specialist and establishing a reading committee. Hesse, Smith, and Nettleton suggest: " . . . the basic cause for the lack of cooperation that often exists among reading consultants, school principals and content area teachers in the secondary school is that neither knows what to expect of the other." (25)

The authors go on to report the development and use of an instrument to determine the preferred roles of a reading consultant. This instrument consisted of 42 items. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a five-point scale, from very important to unimportant. The items used in the instrument are listed below. The social studies teachers, their principal, and the school reading specialist can use these items as a base for building their own instrument. Using this instrument, the parties involved should respond to each item honestly and then openly discuss why they responded as they did.

1. Help measure the ability of each of your students to read the material you assign.

2. Administer diagnostic reading tests to students identified as having problems in reading.

3. Help plan instruction that teaches students to infer ideas that are not directly stated in the material read.

4. Compile and interpret profiles of standardized reading test scores for your class.

5. Aid in constructing questions that will lead students to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate materials you assign.

6. Teach, in various subject area classes, sequences of appropriate reading lessons that are based on the materials assigned in those classes.

7. Discuss with you ways to use oral reading in your class so that the best interests of both good and poor readers are served.

8. Conduct inservice sessions that will give all teachers a better understanding of the reading process and how to teach reading.

9. Sit in on classes and help determine the effectiveness of your teaching of reading in your subject area.

10. Teach, in various subject area classes, sequences of appropriate reading lessons through use of commercial reading workbooks and kits.

11. Discuss with you the reasons why certain students appear to remain poor readers in spite of extra help they have received.

12. Offer classes in efficient reading for teachers so they might improve their reading speed.

13. Teach word analysis and basic comprehension skills to classes of low level readers.

14. Provide teachers with workbooks, kits, and other instructional material that students can work through independently to improve their general vocabulary and comprehension.

15. Offer suggestions for individualizing your reading assignments according to students' abilities and interests.

16. Conduct short lecture-discussion sessions at staff meetings on the topic of "helping students who have reading problems."

17. Aid in setting up classroom situations in which students can work together in pairs or in small groups on reading skills used to read materials you assign.

18. Help find readings better suited than the textbook to certain students' abilities.

19. Provide classes in reading for teachers, so they might improve their own critical reading skills.

20. Team with a committee of teachers, department heads, and the principal in setting the goals of the school reading program.

21. Teach reading classes for college preparatory students and students with good basic skill development.

22. Set up and operate a study skills center where students can get individual help with their reading assignments.

23. Assist in selecting and sequencing class activities related to reading that will aid the student in developing the concepts of the course.

24. Present to regular classes techniques students can use to improve the reading skills needed in those classes.

25. Help plan instructional practices that lead students to recognize the logical organization of the reading material you assign.

26. Set priorities of the reading program in your school without assistance from teachers and administrators.

27. Assist in creating learning situations in which students can apply the reading skills taught in the language arts classes.

28. Provide two or three hours of instruction in reading per week to various individuals or small groups who have been identified as seriously disabled readers.

29. Team with you in your unit planning to help you incorporate reading instruction into your content teaching.

30. Help you organize a program of voluntary reading that is related to the objectives of your course.

31. Work with the librarian in ordering a wide range of materials for recreational reading.

32. Aid you in helping students see the relationship between their listening and their reading.

33. Help you to teach your students how to read for specific purposes.

34. Plan and supervise an attractive area loaded with paperback books where students can come and read for pleasure.

35. Give you suggestions for helping students master the vocabulary they encounter in the reading you assign.

36. Help you locate or construct phonograph records, audiotapes, pictures, filmstrips that will give poor readers the information they need without requiring them to read.

37. Help you construct exercises that teach students to vary reading rates according to the material you assign and their purposes for reading it.

38. Work with you in developing ways to help students utilize their background experiences to understand what they read.

39. Assist in setting up writing assignments, such as summarizing, that will cause students to attend to the organization of the material read in order to boost comprehension and retention.

40. Identify and list the reading skills that students will need if they are to be successful in the various subject area classes.

41. Work with students in classroom settings to develop their abilities to function effectively in small groups.

42. Provide instruction in speed reading for good students.

For those teachers working to establish a reading committee, some of the following guidelines are useful:

1. Determine who will serve on the committee. In a small school every teacher, if possible, should be on the committee; in a large building at least two representatives from each content area should serve on the committee.

2. Decide what types of reading activities you want to see in your school. This typically includes the following instructional strands: developmental, corrective, remedial, and accelerated. Smith, Otto, and Hansen have defined these terms as follows:(44)

- *Developmental Instruction*—" . . . Developmental instruction is regular classroom program that is pitched to and adequate for the normal child who moves through the skill developmental sequence without complications. This is not to say that any slapdash approach will do. On the contrary, because developmental instruction causes the main thrust of the overall program, it should receive high attention in planning and substantial support in execution."
- *Corrective Instruction*—" . . . The purpose of corrective instruction is to provide immediate diagnosis and corrective teaching to eliminate gaps and minor deficiencies in skill development. Offered by the classroom teacher within the framework of regular developmental instruction, it is actually an integral part of the general program. It is differentiated from developmental instruction here mainly to underscore the need for constant assessment of skill development and prompt provision of additional instruction when needed. Many skill development problems can be corrected with relative ease if they are detected and corrected before they lead to more generalized breakdowns in the skill development process and, in turn, to the failure-frustration-failure effect that saps motivation and destroys positive self-evaluation."
- *Remedial Instruction*—" . . . Remedial instruction differs from corrective instruction in degree and from adapted instruction in expectations. Remedial instruction is reserved for pupils with disabilities so severe that they need more intensive help than can be provided through corrective instruction, but in either case the expectation is that achievement deficits will be eliminated or reduced as a result of the teaching. In adapted instruction, there is no expectation of achievement at grade level or better; the instruction is geared to the limited abilities of the individual."
- *Accelerated Instruction*—" . . . Accelerated instruction should proceed from a systematic assessment of individual skill development. Once a child has a solid skill development base, the pace of instruction can be quickened, the scope broadened, or both, without concern that essentials are being missed or passed over too lightly."

3. Decide which of these strands are most important to teach. This decision rests on your individual curricula, students, overall goals and objectives for the school and for the district, and community input. All of these factors should be weighed in deciding which strand(s) to emphasize.

4. Decide who is responsible for implementing each instructional strand. Again, several factors need to be considered. First, what strands fit into your program of classroom instruction? Second, how can the reading teacher assist you in implementing strands in your classroom? Third, what additional training will you need to implement these strands? Fourth, when will it be appropriate to review the

instructional priorities? Finally, how will you evaluate whether you have successfully implemented these instructional strands? These questions can best be addressed by meeting with faculty at regular intervals and discussing these concerns.

In addition, you can conduct a survey to find out what is already occurring in your school. For example, what kind of reading instruction exists in the content areas? What materials are available in the classroom library? What level of volunteer help is available? What inservice is available and has been successful? What kind of support is the reading teacher prepared to give? What reading strategies and reading techniques are teachers currently employing in their classroom?

These suggestions and guidelines can assist in getting a reading program off the ground. Obviously, these suggestions must be integrated with existing school programs and priorities and, more importantly, the programs and priorities of your area—social studies.

## TEACHERS: DEALING WITH ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH INSERVICE

### The Concern

Social studies teachers, like other teachers, face two interrelated concerns: accountability and inservice training. More than any other topics, these two issues are likely to raise the hackles of a teacher. Accountability brings with it the specter of "merit pay" or "forced retirement." Inservice training universally evokes yawns of boredom and cries of frustration. Perhaps one could take the view that one complements the other: relevant inservice could result in better teacher accountability in the classroom. Yet, accountability and inservice training still provoke negative comments.

### Teacher Statement

"In terms of accountability, my principal and department chairperson are holding me and my colleagues responsible for reading instruction. In addition, they are tying this to tenure and merit pay. The next thing, I know, I'll be evaluated by student performance on standardized reading tests. In the area of inservice, two things are on the horizon. First, I have to take a reading course in the next year at the university to be recertified. Second, my principal has scheduled a sequence of three two-hour inservice presentations on reading. I know this inservice session, just like many other inservice activities in the past, is going to bore me to tears. I could make better use of the time working and redesigning my social studies course."

### Interpreting the Teacher's Statement

"I don't feel competent to teach reading in social studies. Second, I am not sure how to integrate reading into the social studies curriculum. Finally, I have little or no faith in standardized tests, especially reading tests.

"Regarding inservice, I have spent enough time, energy, and money taking courses at the university. My preparation in social studies is very good—after all, that is what I majored in and that is what I am teaching. In addition, taking one or more courses or going to one more inservice session is not going to make me a better

teacher. More time to teach and more time to create good lessons will make me a better teacher."

**Our Response**

Social studies teachers are not only concerned with students or programs for students. In a very real way they, like all other teachers and administrators, cannot begin to focus on educational issues until problems that influence their lives are resolved. Two such issues are accountability in the classroom and opportunities for personal growth (inservice). These two are brought together here because administrators who see inservice training as an intervention to be used when a teacher is judged as not performing as desired, frequently destroy a teacher's natural desire to do well and to learn to do better. Teachers who cannot assess their own strengths and influence the design of inservice programs will not free themselves from the negative aspects of inservice and accountability. Hopefully, the three suggestions outlined below will help social studies teachers evaluate their performance as they assume their roles in school reading programs.

1. Respond to an instrument that helps define reading and illustrates the skills involved. Flanagan (19) reports the use of one such instrument. Part B of the instrument (see Appendix, Text Reference III) contains 27 competencies that relate to reading instruction in content classes. Teachers should respond to each item on this instrument using a five-point scale (presented in the directions). The self-rating procedure will give you a better idea of what is involved in teaching reading in the social studies classroom as well as a sense of what competencies you may want to develop further.

2. Examine some activities designed to teach reading skills. Social studies teachers who spend one hour reading over and doing some reading activity sheets typically used in a school's developmental reading class not only gain a sense of what reading is but also come away with four or five examples of what they can do to help students in their own classrooms. Most school reading specialists will gladly direct you to such reading materials.

3. Create your own active reading self-assessment. In Chapter 3 we examined seven active reading behaviors your students should display. Because we feel so strongly about your responsibility to promote these active reading behaviors, we suggest that you do a self-assessment related to those behaviors. Such an assessment would follow these steps:

    1. Define each of the active reading behaviors for yourself.

    2. Identify one way you promoted each active reading behavior in the past two weeks.

    3. Identify the one active reading behavior you value most. Explain why.

    4. Find one or two other social studies teachers who will do the self-assessment outlined in steps one through three. Share responses with each other and borrow ideas from each other.

As a result of these three self-assessment activities, you will know more about your own attitude toward teaching reading in your class, you will have developed your own understanding and definition of reading, you will know what other approaches you want to learn and try, and finally, you will have begun to train yourself and identify others who can help you.

# APPENDIX

## TEXT REFERENCE I: CLOZE TEST

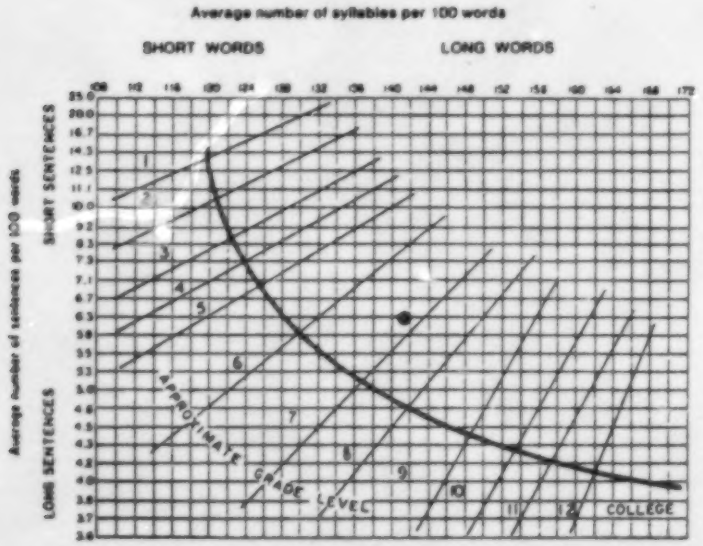
As teachers move toward more individualized instruction, people acquainted with specific need in "problem" areas, such as reading, will be of increasingly greater assistance in fulfilling the variety of needs in the classroom. When a teacher realizes ___(1)___ one of his pupils ___(2)___ difficulty with the content ___(3)___ because of a lack ___(4)___ reading skills, one of ___(5)___ options available is to ___(6)___ with a reading specialist. ___(7)___ making an initial assessment ___(8)___ what might be needed ___(9)___ terms of individualized reading ___(10)___ the teacher then shares ___(11)___ perceptions with the specialist. She, in turn, views the situation firsthand in order to make an individual assessment.

*Did you fill in these answers?* 1. that 2. has 3. material 4. of 5. the 6. consult 7. After 8. of 9. in 10. instruction 11. these

## TEXT REFERENCE II: FRY READABILITY GRAPH

### GRAPH FOR ESTIMATING READABILITY

By Edward Fry, Rutgers University Reading Center,
New Brunswick, New Jersey




DIRECTIONS: Randomly select three 100-word passages from a book or an article. Plot the average number of syllables and the average number of sentences per 100 words on the graph to determine the grade level of the material. Choose more passages per book if great variability is observed, and conclude that the book has uneven readability. Few books will fall in the gray area, but when they do, grade level scores are invalid.

EXAMPLE:

| | Syllables | Sentences |
|---|---|---|
| 1st Hundred Words | 124 | 6.6 |
| 2nd Hundred Words | 141 | 5.5 |
| 3rd Hundred Words | 158 | 6.8 |
| AVERAGE | 141 | 6.3 |

READABILITY: 7th Grade (see dot plotted on graph)

SOURCE: The Readability Graph conceived by Edward Fry, Rutgers University Reading Center, New Brunswick, New Jersey, is not copyrighted. Anyone may reproduce it in any quantity without permission from the author and editor. The Readability Graph can be found in Edward Fry, *Reading Instruction for Classroom and Clinic*, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1972, p. 232.

## TEXT REFERENCE III: CONTENT AREA TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF QUALIFICATION IN READING INSTRUCTION

HOW QUALIFIED ARE YOU—

| | Very Qualified | | | | Not Qualified |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. To assist students in setting a definite purpose for reading assigned materials? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 2. To construct study guides that cause students to engage in the appropriate reading-thinking process for a given selection? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 3. To create situations in your class in which students apply the reading skills taught in other classes? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 4. To structure lessons that help students see an author's purpose and evaluate the effectiveness of the writing in reaching that purpose? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 5. To create reading assignments that assist students in identifying significant ideas and then in determining the relationships between them? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 6. To design reading tasks that require students to skim and scan materials for specific information? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 7. To create exercises that assist students in analyzing the influence of context on the literal and emotional meanings of words? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 8. To design questions that require students to determine the meanings of new words through contextual clues? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

SOURCE: Beverly Chin Flanagan, "A Competency-Based Assessment of Secondary Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions of Qualification in Content Area Reading Instruction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1975).

| | Very Qualified | | | | Not Qualified |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. To vary reading assignments according to the reading ability of the student? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 10. To create situations that require students to make inferences and generalizations from their reading and to discuss their reasons? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 11. To design lessons that require students to use information gained in reading to solve a problem? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 12. To plan instruction using materials and texts of varying reading difficulty to meet individual differences in reading ability? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 13. To design activities that motivate students to read assigned materials? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 14. To provide instruction in reading graphic and pictorial aids such as charts, maps, tables, cartoons, and diagrams? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 15. To organize and conduct small group activities for students to discuss reading assignments so they might check their understanding among themselves? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 16. To formulate questions that help students relate, compare, analyze, and evaluate material as they read an assignment? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 17. To structure assignments that require students to follow a sequence of events or directions? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 18. To organize your class into small task groups based on your knowledge of students' reading ability? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 19. To develop a conceptual background for material to be read by preceding reading assignments with | | | | | |

| | Very Qualified | | | | Not Qualified |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| concrete experiences and discussions? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 20. To help students identify and locate reading material of appropriate interest and difficulty? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 21. To motivate students to read a wide variety of subject-related materials? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 22. To design situations that encourage students to periodically reflect on the information already gained in a reading selection and to predict what the author might say next? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 23. To select or design reading activities that provide concrete information on each student's reading strengths and weaknesses in the content areas? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 24. To develop activities that require students to read from different sources on a particular subject and then compare and contrast information they have gathered? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 25. To create tasks that cause students to attend to the organization of reading materials? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 26. To structure questions to reveal the degree and level of students' comprehension of reading assignments? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| 27. To incorporate into your assignments instruction on how to read regular classroom materials? | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ | ____ |

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